AMENDMENTS

Kindly amend the application as follows:

In the Claims:

Kindly amend claims 1, 2, and 6, and add new claims 7-12 as follows.

1. (Three Times Amended) An isolated DNA molecule comprising at least a first and a second segment, said first segment having a nucleotide sequence [comprising] corresponding to SEQ ID NO:1, and said second segment having a nucleotide sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID NO:2.

2. (Three Times Amended) [An] The isolated DNA molecule of claim 1,[having a nucleotide sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:1 and SEQ. ID NO:2;

wherein SEQ ID NO:1 comprises a first exon of an OCIF gene (residues 1173-1202 of SEQ ID NO:1),

wherein SEQ ID NO:2 comprises a second exon of an OCIF gene (residues 130-498 of SEQ ID NO:2), a third exon of an OCIF gene (residues 4503-4694 of SEQ ID NO:2), a fourth exon of an OCIF gene (residues 6715-6939 of SEQ ID NO:2), and a fifth exon of an OCIF gene (residues 8668-9054 of SEQ ID NO:2), and]

wherein said [OCIF gene] DNA molecule encodes a protein that inhibits differentiation or maturation of osteoclasts.

6. (Twice Amended) A method for producing the protein of claim 5, the method comprising:

inserting a DNA molecule into an expression vector, the DNA molecule comprising at least a first and a second segment, said first segment having a nucleotide sequence [comprising] corresponding to SEQ ID NO:1, and said second segment having a nucleotide sequence corresponding to SEQ. ID NO:2;

transforming a host cell with the expression vector;

culturing the host cell such that the protein is expressed by the expression vector; and

isolating the expressed protein,

whereby the protein is expressed in culture and isolated therefrom.

--7. (New) The DNA molecule of claim 1, wherein said first segment is upstream of said second segment.

8. (New) The DNA molecule of claim 1, wherein said second segment is upstream of said first segment.

9. (New) The DNA molecule of claim 2, wherein said first segment is upstream of said second segment.

10. (New) The DNA molecule of claim 2, wherein said second segment is upstream of said first segment.

11. (New) The method of claim 6, wherein said first segment is upstream of said second segment.

12. (New) The method of claim 6, wherein said second segment is upstream of said first segment.--